

Netherne Management Limited



To: All Members, Netherne on the Hill

September 2015

This is Netherne Management Limited's second newsletter for 2015, following the July 2015 update that was published on our website www.nman.co.uk, and is being distributed with the Q4 2015 service charge bills. For the benefit of anyone who has not yet read the July 2015 update, we have repeated some of the information that was shared in that earlier update.

As advised earlier this year, our intention is to issue quarterly updates to members, with two of these being by way of a letter that will be distributed with service charge invoices, and two by way of a website update (including a link to that update from the Netherne Facebook page). If other ad hoc communications are required, we will use a website update.

We had a request to also send out future communications by email, and we are therefore collecting members' email addresses to facilitate this. If you would like to be on the email distribution list, please complete your details by typing the following link in your internet browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NMLEmails>

Finances, debt and service charges

- Our finances remain healthy, with our reserves able to support the cost of large, non-regular repair and maintenance work, and the costs of improvements to the Estate, Village Hall and Leisure Centre. Such costs are not met from budgeted service charge income.
- During 2015, our total debt (unpaid service charges) has reduced from £74,000 to £28,000 as we have continued to chase down our debtors. This process included one of the directors and our Managing Agent (SHW) having to spend a day in Court with one of our hardcore debtors.
- Several members have still not paid the annual estate rent charge (£25) that was due on 1 April 2015. Separate arrangements have to be made to pay this charge – it is not collected by any direct debits that are set up to pay your service charges. If you have not yet paid the annual estate rent charge, please do so to avoid being referred to our solicitors.
- Despite a re-broking exercise that we carried out, insurance costs for the village hall and leisure centre have risen significantly, following increases in assessed rebuilding costs. The insurance premium is now £22,500; roughly double the premium we paid last year. This will result in an increased service charge budget for 2016 and beyond.

Leisure Centre and Village Hall

- The new multi-gym equipment was installed in June.
- Hot water supplies to showers have been fixed.
- A number of pool lights were not working, with the fittings having corroded. New and more appropriate pool lighting has now been installed.
- Stepping stone paths laid on the green, to avoid walking on (sometimes muddy) grass when going to the leisure centre.
- Exterior works to village hall and leisure centre underway. This includes masonry, roofing, and brick works, timber repairs and decorating works. Expected completion is end September.

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- Window protection to be fitted to village hall windows to prevent further damage arising from vandalism. Unfortunately, before this protection could be installed, we have had another instance of mindless vandalism with another village hall window broken ☹
- We had a request from Caterham gymnastics club to use the village hall several times a week, after they lost the use of another hall. Despite the income that this would generate, we were concerned about the significant disruption and parking issues this could cause to residents in Italian Piazza, Cayton Road and Lord's Wood House, and so had to decline the request.

Estate

- The footpath around the Green / Chapel Walk has been resurfaced.
- Contractor employed to deal with the extensive goats rue.
- Two more litter bins have been positioned in the village.
- Mal-functioning street light on Upper Lodge Way being investigated and repaired. (The Upper Lodge Way lights are the only ones in the village that are the responsibility of NML; all other street lighting is the responsibility of Surrey County Council).
- The result of the consultation on commercial dog walking on NML land was published on our website on 27 July. Whilst there was a significant "No" vote, we also had 52% of respondents agreeing that commercial dog walking should be permitted but under a licensing scheme with terms and conditions.
- We have been busy preparing the license documentation, which should be available shortly. It will then be given to known commercial dog walkers (two of whom have already contacted us about it) and the licensing scheme formally implemented.
- Works to kissing gate and fences at Bowen Way entrance to tipping fields were halted, as contractor had not delivered what was envisaged. Initial plans have now been developed for a redesign of the fences/gate, with lowered fencing and pyracantha hedging in front of it. We need to give some further thought to the gate, with a view to presenting options to nearby residents for their thoughts prior to implementation.
- A new estate mower had to be sourced as the old one had reached the end of its life.
- New chestnut trees will be planted on Netherne Drive to replace the ones that have died.
- We are investigating putting lighting on the footpath to Hooley, having received a small grant from one of our county councillors to help fund this. This is now at discussion stage with UK Power Networks to get an appropriate power supply.

Netherne Community Bus

The Netherne Community Bus is not funded by the service charge budget and is entirely reliant on fare income from passengers. The Bus Company is a separate company from NML, but has the same Board of Directors. We include it in our updates as we know many Netherne commuters rely on this valuable service.

We noted in our July 2015 update that there had been an unexpected dip in ticket sales during the second quarter of 2015. We are pleased to report that during the third quarter, the decline has been reversed and ticket sales are back at the level we had in March. We expect part of the reason for this reversal has been the closure of the Lion Green car park in Coulsdon.

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We would still like more residents to use the Bus, and hope that ticket sales continue to increase as ticket sales revenue is needed to cover the running costs. Ticket prices have remained at £1.50 ever since we started the service back in April 2012, and we would really like to keep prices at this level, but we need the passenger numbers to justify this.

A Call to local tradespersons

The Board is keen to use reputable local people / businesses to carry out work that we have to contract out. As an example, we have utilised the services of a carpenter who lives in the village to tend to some works to the village hall doors. If you are (or know of) a tradesperson who would be interested in being approached for future contract work, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please could you email your details to our managing agent, Michele Gallagher, at mgallagher@shw.co.uk

Summary

We hope you have found this to be an informative update. The directors (all of whom are residents in the village and who voluntarily give up their own time to run NML, to keep Netherne a great place to live ☺ ☺) have found 2015 to be another busy and particularly challenging year. Please do say "hello" if you see one of us around the village. We will write again in December.

With best regards for the rest of 2015.

The Directors of Netherne Management Limited:

Steven Buczek

Jo Robins

Robert Murdoch

Nikki Le Cluse

Rajen Shah